How the War News Comes

Some Famous Correspondents Who Are In the Far East. Handicapped by Strict Censorship—Cablegrams That Cost Over Four Dollars a Word. How Melville E. Stone Secured the Czar's Aid

THUS far in the Russo-Japanese struggle the war correspondent has not been much in evidence. The newspapers of America and Europe and the Associated Press are spending enormous sums; scores of correspondents are in Japan, Russia, China and Korea, and yet, as the New York Herald pathetically remarks, "the returns have been totally inadequate to the expenditures."

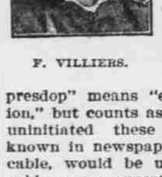
Among the famous correspondents now in the far east endeavoring to enlighten the American reader as to the course of events are John Fox, Jr., author of "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come;" Jack London, whose novel, "The Call of the Wild," was one of the great successes of last year; George Kennan, Frederic Villiers, Richard Harding Davis, Edwin Emerson, Jr.; Frederick Palmer, William Dinwiddie, H. J. Whigham, amateur golf champion in 1896-7; Bennett Burleigh and a host of others who have won fame in literature and as newspaper writers.

M. E. STONE.

But while trained men have been stationed at every strategic point throughout the war zone they have not been able to break through the rigid censorship established by the belligerents. Practically the only information that has been given to the world has come through the Associated Press.

The success of the Associated Press was made possible by the foresight of Mr. Melville E. Stone, general manager of the organization. Recognizing that perhaps St. Petersburg would be the most important point for news during the war, Mr. Stone early in the present year visited Russia and while there had a personal audience with the czar. At that time he succeeded in assuring the czar that the Associated Press would be impartial in its reports in the event of war and in return received the czar's assurance that the St. Petersburg bureau would be the Associated Press, Robert M. Collins, had witnessed the fighting, had noted the death of the colonel and secured the names of the wounded, had given the dispatch to a courier to proceed by steamer to Chefu, there to be started on the telegraph to Shanghai and there on the cable through the Indian ocean, up through the Red sea to London, finally to New York. The press rate from China was 55 cents a word, and as press messages had to take their turn after important government and commercial messages this might mean delay of two or three days. The cable companies have what is known as the "urgent" message rate, which was $4.15 a word from Shanghai to New York city. Collins' message of 130 words was at the "urgent" rate, which means that after it succeeded in reaching Shanghai it was pushed over the cable ahead of all other reports.

When cablegrams cost anywhere from 40 cents to $4 per word, the correspondent is expected to abbreviate to the last degree and at the same time make his cablegram intelligible. Not only does he omit all obvious and unessential words, but he also abbreviates and compounds several words into one. For instance, "expresdop" means "expressed the opinion," but counts as one word. To the uninitiated these cable dispatches, known in newspaper offices as "skin" cable, would be unreadable, but the cable news expert reads them with ease and fills in the omitted words.



F. VILLIERS.

The regulations of the Japanese government in regard to messages are a source of great annoyance to correspondents and seriously interfere with their work. In Japan all dispatches for points beyond Tokyo must be filed with the censor, properly translated into Japanese. This necessitates that each correspondent be attended by a Japanese translator.

Among the best known of the correspondents now in the east is George Kennan, who will be with the Japanese. Since the publication of his book, "The Siberian Exile System," about fifteen years ago, he has been persona non grata in Russia. While traveling through that country in 1901 he was stopped at St. Petersburg and escorted to the frontier.

GEORGE KENNAN.

Frederic Villiers, England's most famous war artist and correspondent, is with the Russian forces. He gained his first experience in 1876 in Servia. His next war, the Russo-Turkish, not only established his reputation as a correspondent, but particularly fitted him for his present assignment, for he was with the Russians at Plevna and Shipka pass. Later he was at the bombardment of Alexandria and at Tel-el-Kebir. Since then he has not missed a campaign of any consequence.

John Fox, Jr., is a native of Kentucky and is one of the most conspicuous of the younger American story writers of the present time. Previous to his latest success, "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come," he had written several stories of Kentucky life that attracted much attention. Among them are "A Mountain Europa," "A Cumberland Vendetta" and "Hell-fer-Sartain." The strength of his literary work lies in his character sketching. Mr. Fox gained his first experience in war as correspondent in Cuba.

R. H. DAVIS.

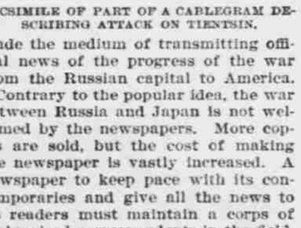
In America no correspondent is better known than Richard Harding Davis, whose vivid pen pictures of stirring scenes, written in his picturesque style, long ago made him famous. While immensely popular as a novelist, Davis is a war correspondent of high standing. He followed the operations of the Greco-Turkish, the Spanish-American and the Boer-British wars and covered besides a revolution in Venezuela. Last year he was in Bulgaria during the uprising against the sultan.

Not so well known to the general public is William Dinwiddie, governor of Lepanto-Bontoc province, in the Philippines, who is with the Japanese army in Korea. Mr. Dinwiddie has obtained leave of absence from his post in the Philippines. Governor Dinwiddie went to Cuba at the beginning of the Spanish war, subsequently going to the Philippines. When the Boer war broke out he went to South Africa as a correspondent and photographer for one of the big New York weeklies, remaining there to the end of the war. In 1902 he established a paper in Manila, subsequently leaving it to become the governor of Lepanto-Bontoc.

W. DINWIDDIE.

The cost of cablegrams is a still heavier item of expense. For instance, from Chefu to New York the cable rate for press dispatches is 42 cents a word, and the same rate is charged from Tientsin and Shanghai. From Port Arthur via the Pacific cable the rate is $1.02 a word, and from Tokyo it costs 54 cents a word to transmit a press message. From Vladivostok and Chemulpo no press rates are made, and messages must be paid for in advance at the full rate, which is about three times higher. The following incident illustrates the expense of cabling war news:

In the American newspapers on Monday, July 16, 1900, was a dispatch from Tientsin, China, which recounted the fact that the allied forces were fighting the Chinese troops in that city and, what was of the gravest human interest in the United States, the further fact that the Ninth regiment of United States regulars was in action and that its gallant colonel, Emerson H. Liscum, had been killed. The readers of the newspapers accepted this information in the ordinary way, very few possibly giving thought as to how the news had been procured or how it had circled three-fourths of the globe to be given out to the newspapers throughout this country. A correspondent of



FACSIMILE OF PART OF A CABLEGRAM DESCRIBING ATTACK ON TIENTSIN.

made the medium of transmitting official news of the progress of the war from the Russian capital to America.

Contrary to the popular idea, the war between Russia and Japan is not welcomed by the newspapers. More copies are sold, but the cost of making the newspaper is vastly increased. A newspaper to keep pace with its contemporaries and give all the news to its readers must maintain a corps of high priced correspondents in the field, as well as keep in touch with the headquarters of the contending armies. In some cases syndicates are formed, but most of the big newspapers of this country have anywhere from three to a dozen skilled writers on their payrolls in eastern Asia.

RAILWAY CLERKS' MEALS.

Why a Line Centering at Chicago Will Feed Its Employees at Noon.

One of the largest railroads centering at Chicago is making preparations to feed its hundreds of clerks at the noon hour, says a Chicago dispatch.

"The First National bank bears the expense of feeding its clerks at the noon hour, and as the undertaking has been quite satisfactory all around we have made a move to follow in the footsteps of Chicago's greatest banking institution," said a high official of the road.

"Our men are at work at 8 o'clock, and they have an hour for luncheon. Some of them go out and have a bowl of milk and some cereal or other, while others take a sandwich and a cup of coffee or a piece of pie and a glass of milk. Many of the men do not have enough of the right kind of food to be in the best condition to serve the company. They do fairly well on their light meal until about 4 o'clock, when they become tired and hungry.

"We propose to give them a good big cut of beef, pork, fish or fowl, together with vegetables, bread and butter, milk, tea or coffee and a substantial dessert. The officials have discussed the matter thoroughly and have arrived at the conclusion that both the men and the company would benefit by the change. The men will feel more like doing a good afternoon's work after a square meal. We will shorten the luncheon hour from sixty to thirty minutes."

The Evil Eye Among Egyptians.

The modern Egyptian is a believer in the evil eye, to avert which he hangs around the neck charms supposed to possess a magic power. These are usually worn by children and consist of little tin or leather cases, which inclose words either from the Scriptures or the Koran, if the children are of Moslem parents.